THE PLAIN VIEW

OCTOBER 1946

The Public and the 1944 Education Act
LEAH MANNING, M.P.

The Modern Family
ELIOT SLATER, M.A., M.D.

The Social Ideal
H. J. BLACKHAM

price sixpence

What the plain view perceives is neither obvious nor obscure

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COMMENTARY

THE CRISIS. Roughly speaking, in the history of European political thought there has been tension between those who have regarded men as free and equal by natural right, and their opponents who have regarded freedom and equality as matters of fact defined and secured by law in actual organised societies: a division, that is, between radicals regarding liberty and equality as prior to society and limiting society, and conservatives regarding society as producing and limiting liberty and equality. Today the debate may be said to have shifted to the third element in the social ideal, the concept of fraternity; and there is a like tension. There are those who think of men as being brothers because they share the same human situation, are faced with the same mortal fate, have a common life and common resources with which to live it; and therefore their essential interests are identical and creative co-operation is their rational imperative. There are others who base themselves on the actuality of brotherhood amongst those who share a set of interests to which they are born, predominantly a class interest or a national interest. Such particular forms of social solidarity exert tremendous pressure upon their constituents, and they tend to consolidate and expand themselves and, inevitably, generate conflicts with other organised interests. Nevertheless, those who regard society as producing and limiting fraternity (whether communists or nationalists) are prepared for the conflict which they make inevitable and regard as inevitable. And it is inevitable, no amount of individual intelligence and goodwill can avail to avert it, unless we can drastically modify these successful limited forms of human brotherhood in time. They are being altered daily: by public opinion, by public policies, by social developments, and by new purposes and new institutions. But we must not underestimate the formidable difficulty of what has to be done. The sovereign nation state and organised class interests are historical formations of immense strength and tenacity and their essential character and purpose have to be altered from within, quickly. Meanwhile, a powerful section of mankind does not believe that they can be altered and has in effect accepted the consequences. Aggravating the difficulty is the distribution, as it were, of responsibility. The policies and purposes and decisions which cumulatively produce a catastrophe can in isolation and at the time of inception be explained and justified by the responsible persons: the outcome, like a natural calamity, need be no man's direct responsibility. Man can pity himself and claim that he is the victim of history and geography: that space and time are too much for him.

The truly formidable difficulty of what has to be done is not likely to be underestimated by sober reflection. The danger rather is that we shall be unnerved by it. Bewilderment and depression are already prevalent. Yet there is enough imaginative statesmanship and public spirit in the world, and enough sense of peril, to save the situation. And each one of us can identify himself with the hopeful practicable policies,

and fill out his scope with the creative effort to make human life worth saving.

THE BRIDGE. During the war it was characteristic of thoughtful anti-Nazi Germans and Austrians to dream of a new chapter in European history in which their countries would serve as a bridge between East and West. Was this hope the obverse of a secret dread of their fate, of what is happening now? Both unhappy peoples move under the influence of counterpoised masses whose attraction keeps them in chaos, prevents their forming a nucleus and finding an orbit. (What immense relief if this pitiless metaphor could be changed with graphic truth to the humane figure of a wife trying to make a home under one roof with her mother and mother-in-law! That is the *détente* we long for, a Europe in which the old tragi-comedy of human life could appear).

On existing conditions there can be no independent natural politics or economics in Austria nor in Germany. The natural regional economic relations of Austria, for example, lie with her neighbours, the Danubian lands, and with the Soviet Union. The question has often been asked, whether Austria can live; and the answer is, yes if she can develop an interdependent economy with these neighbours. Yet political opinion in the country is markedly hostile to these affiliations, and the government is ready to favour trade relations which cannot possibly make a permanent foundation on which to build. Politics made disastrous nonsense of economics in this region between the wars; and the new variation on that theme begins with even more horrid discords.

The plight and problem of Germany is all too familiar. Unless some tolerable form of unification is achieved the zones of occupation will become an intolerable burden (moral not less than physical) upon the occupying powers; yet the Soviet Union cannot reconcile herself to a Germany not dominated by Communists, nor the Western powers to a Germany inspired by Communists.

The exponents of geo-politics used to see the ultimate issue of world dominion lying between Germany and Russia, and only between Germany and Russia: no other state had the geographical position and the human and economic resources to attempt it. The liberties of mankind therefore depended upon a system of strong and independent states flourishing between Germany and Russia and supported by an alert and co-operative outside world. To-day Germany is crushed and the buffer states are already satellites of the Soviet Union. There is enough plausibility in the conceptions of geo-politics to make a painful dilemma for the Western powers. The situation calls for a boldly conceived united policy based on principles and forcefully pursued. Such a policy would not encourage Austria to form a Western political orientation without economic foundation, and would press very hard for a properly democratic unification of Germany. Mr. Byrnes made a bid for such a policy at Stuttgart and the sequel will show what the practical possibilities are. If a united Germany cannot be created by united

Allied policy, there will have to be a divided Germany and a Western *bloc*.

FROM THE TRAIN. If the changes in farming practice during the past fifty years were listed they would give the impression that the face of the countryside had been changed. But it is the old unchanging England that the townsman sees from his seat in the train in transit across the country to his holiday resort, or returning home. At least, it is so still to the untrained eye. Wire fences in place of hedgerows, tractors instead of horse teams, new crops and the break in old rotations, the disappearance of the stackyard and of field stacks; these and many other things are taking place everywhere and speak of the new opportunist and commercial methods which have been enabled by scientific knowledge and techniques and national policy to supersede both the former traditional high-farming and the ranch farming and rank dereliction of farming which devastated the country between the two wars. Yet to most eyes the country is the country, a place of trees and fields, crops and beasts, lanes and farm buildings, unaltered from generation to generation in their generality; for it was an 18th century Londoner who said that one green field was like another, and perhaps most Londoners do not think differently to-day. When people speak of the spoiling of the countryside, it is mostly the sprawl and scatter of housing which they have in mind, and the siting of industrial plant in the neighbourhood of beauty spots; and these things are not very noticeable on a cross-country journey from the train.

The radical changes which have taken place and are going on, whether or not the townsman notices them, are necessary, and they are improvements; but there is at least one thing they are fast destroying which is to be bitterly regretted, and that is the regional character and quality of farming. The ubiquitous black and white cattle, commercial cows, are the symbol of this destruction. The native dairy herds are as nearly extinct as the red squirrel. And the symbol stands for more than milk. Quantity production must win in a mass society. It has been so with fruits and vegetables; it has been so conspicuously with cheeses. During the war the production of our numerous native farmhouse cheeses was (rightly) prohibited, or else modified to ensure the keeping properties of the cheese; and the long-term milk shortage, measured by the beneficent national policy of ensuring adequate consumption by subsidizing consumers in nutritional need of milk, promises continuity of control and the permanent displacement of English cheeses with the methods and skills which produced them.

NOT AN ILL WIND. Our ruined corn harvest has an offset in the equally unseasonable flush of grass, which has helped with the milk and will be some compensation for the lost forage crops. Moreover, it is the world pool of cereals which is decisive nowadays, and more important harvests than ours have been good; the prospect is less anxious than our home skies have made us think. Add to this a relief of the long

anxiety which our water engineers have felt about our depleted water resources after years of deficient rainfall, and the total account on balance is something we may well be thankful for in a matter which mocks the wit of man. A little more grace on one or two critical days, and we should have done very well indeed. It is really no wonder that farmers appeal to the churches to pray for seasonable weather. Yet marvel at it one must; and sober reflection upon its implications would make a philosopher weep.

The following three papers were prepared in connection with a Conference on Aspects of the Social Ideal which was arranged by the Ethical Union at High Leigh, Hoddesdon, August 24-26. A paper given in the fourth session by Mr. F. J. Osborn on The Local Community has not been received in time for printing in this issue.

THE PUBLIC AND THE 1944 EDUCATION ACT

SPEAKING recently at an Education Conference, the Minister of Education said:—

"The Government, the Local Authorities and the Teachers are all behind the 1944 Education Act, but the work cannot be left to them alone. We are dealing with *your* children and it is *your* money which is going to be spent. We shall only be able to put this Act into effect if you *want* your children to have the better education which it offers, and if you *want* to spend your money for that purpose."

These indeed are wise and important words. Unless the constant and conscious pressure of the parents of the country is exerted, to see that this great and revolutionary Act is fully implemented, it is likely to remain a dead letter for many years. For the difficulties indeed are great. Nothing is to be gained by minimising them.

What does the Act set out to do; what are the difficulties in the path of achievement; what contribution can parents make towards its success?

Equality of Opportunity

What differentiates the 1944 Act from all its predecessors is that it deliberately sets out to assure to the average child the chances previously reserved for the more obviously brilliant boys and girls.

Although the most striking changes come in the later stages of the system, it is necessary to see the whole picture in order to appreciate this. The old term "Elementary," smeared over with its trail of cheapness, disappears for ever from the educational nomenclature of this country. There will be no more elementary schools, or elementary teachers or elementary children. There will be no more examinations on one catastrophic day in the life of the poor little "eleven plus" to decide for ever his abilities and, more likely than not, his destiny.

In place of all that, is a continuous system of education, administered in three successive stages, primary, secondary, further education. In place of the narrow exclusive examination at eleven plus is "selection" and free secondary education of varying types, for all children in accordance with their ability. In place of the truncated education ending at 14 for 90% of our children, the age will be raised to 16 in successive stages, with part-time education to 18 for all young workers and full time further and University education for all capable of benefitting from it.

That is certainly an improvement, but not a day too soon. Researches have shown that there is no lack of ability in the schools. The number of pupils in Grammar Schools has risen by 23% since before the war—from 470,000 to 580,000. The number of successful candidates for the School Certificate has risen by 30% and for the Higher School Certificate by 75% in the same period. But there is still a great need for more pupils to stay for higher courses at Grammar Schools. In 1938 there were only 19,000 boys and girls between 17 and 18 years old in grant-earning secondary schools—21,000 including independent schools—and this group was necessarily the major source of supply for professions such as teaching, medicine, law, engineering, architecture, the Church and the Civil Service. In 1938, 25% of Grammar School pupils left before they reached the age of 16 and another 15% without taking the School Certificate. But certainly not all children are intending to go into the professions or the Civil Service; they are not fitted to do so and there are many other tasks in society which need to be fulfilled. Yet until now the Grammar School, catering as it does for the child of academic ability, has been regarded by parents, employers and the general public as being the only type of school providing an authentic secondary education. It will not be easy to get rid of this preconceived notion of what a Secondary Education should be and if all types of Secondary Education are to have equality of status in the public mind much publicity and propaganda must be given to the idea that "Secondary Education" is not a "type" of education, but a "stage" in a continuous system.

The Three Types of Secondary Education

Whilst the Minister disclaims all intention of imposing a single pattern of education upon the Secondary Schools, there is a distinct possibility that the schools will settle down into three types catering for three groups of children showing three kinds of differing ability—academic, technical, and general. This dangerously rigid classification of the abilities of young children is not in accordance with the facts; it will stultify the ideal of equality of status and lead to intellectual stratification during the important formative years of adolescence. If the Minister wishes to avoid these dangers, she will give her blessing and encouragement to the Common Secondary School. What exactly is meant by the Common Secondary School—or as it is sometimes called "The Multilateral School"? It is a school to which all children go at the age of eleven, irrespective of

bias, ascertainable or otherwise. For the first two years they follow a common course. This gives the staff an opportunity of judging, without the aid of an examination, what kind of studies the boy or girl is likely to follow later with the greatest benefit. At the age of thirteen, a degree of specialisation takes place although the basic work still continues. The child is not fitted narrowly into a course. His timetable can flow over into other subjects in which he is interested. Why should a boy with academic interests never have the pleasure of using machines, or the boy with general ability not attend classes in one at least of the more academic subjects in which he is interested—languages, or science or mathematics, for example. Moreover the whole school is one community. The School canteen, the playing field, the school gym., library and assembly hall are used by everyone. The school orchestra, dramatic society and school clubs draw their membership from boys and girls of all types and are thereby enriched and enlivened. Surely it is a splendid idea that, in the formative period of adolescence, our young people should learn to appreciate and admire gifts and abilities different from those they possess themselves.

Some Difficulties

What are the main difficulties which stand in the way of the speedy implementation of the Act? They are threefold: shortage of teachers; shortage of buildings; and the poverty of some of the poor Authorities.

Even before the war the number of teachers, especially of women teachers, being recruited annually was not keeping pace with the requirements of the schools. Classes in the new housing estates were reaching unmanageable proportions and young people viewed with horror the idea of standing before massed formations of fifty and sixty boisterous youngsters, even when otherwise attracted to teaching. The vicious circle was complete. During the war years, all of the men and some of the best material among the girls went into the Forces. The gaps were partially filled by married women who had left the classroom for the home and a family, and by elderly people already retired on pension. The gratitude of the nation is due to some of these people, who grappled heroically with a task which they had never thought to handle again, often under the difficult circumstances of evacuation. Some of the married women, fortunately, are prepared to continue.

The lag in recruitment is one cause of anxiety, but it does not reach the proportions of the problem caused by the requirements of the new Act. Staffs for Nursery classes, the reduction in the size of classes in the new Secondary Schools to 30, the new age groups, the part time education to be given in County Colleges, will require the services of over 100,000 new teachers.

The Government plan for securing these new recruits is by what is known as the Emergency Training Course. It is an intensive training given over a period of four terms to young men and women above the

age of 21 who have been engaged in some form of war service—mainly with the Forces. These new recruits are hand-picked by special Selection Boards. They must have attained a good academic standard; have personal qualifications of a high order and a desire to teach. Since many of them have reached a mature age and often are married people with young families, they make a choice of their career with a full knowledge of its opportunities and responsibilities, which is an enormous advantage. Moreover they possess, in a marked degree, a knowledge and experience of life outside the walls of classroom and college. This is an asset often painfully lacking in the young student in the five-year Training College. I have visited a number of Emergency Training Courses and am deeply impressed by the contribution which these young people can make to the nation's schools.

Whilst training goes on apace, school buildings present a much greater difficulty, for they are not a top priority—"houses before schools" is natural and proper. Meanwhile the Minister of Works has provided enough huts for the new age group 14-15 as from April 1st next.

No doubt the poverty of some rural authorities will be used as an excuse for not pressing forward with their Development Plans. In accordance with the Act, all Development Plans should have reached the Minister by April 1st last, but the number of completed plans presented to Miss Wilkinson was negligible. The real danger to education in the rural areas is the attitude of certain "Excepted Areas," old Part III Authorities who resent the loss of their powers to the County Councils. Many of them, especially London Boroughs like Walthamstow, Leyton, Ilford, and areas like Dagenham and Romford are pressing upon the Boundary Commission their right to County Borough status. The loss of such rateable value and the consequent pastoralisation of the County from which they may be severed is likely to have disastrous effects upon the implementation of the new Act. The administrative clauses of the 1944 Act were for the very purpose of making it possible for County areas to undertake this new and heavy educational expenditure. If the clauses are to be undermined by the shearing away of the wealthy Boroughs, it is difficult to see how the Counties are going to manage.

What Can Parents Do?

In these difficult circumstances it becomes doubly necessary that the public generally and parents in particular should take an active interest in educational affairs in their area and, as far as possible, a share in its administration.

The bottom, but most vital step of the ladder is The Parents' Association. If the school your child is attending doesn't possess one, a small committee of parents should send a courteously worded letter to the Head Teacher, asking if he is willing to discuss the matter. Very few Heads are unwilling to take their share in this form of co-operation with the parents and it is amazing the amount of goodwill engendered and the useful work which can be accomplished as a result.

A flourishing Parents' Association or local grouping of such Associations should make application for representation upon the Divisional Executive which is responsible, under the County Authority, for Education in the local areas. This is not always readily granted, but it is worthy of note that in the White Paper dealing with the constitution of these administrative bodies, Mr. Butler specially mentioned Parents' Associations as suitable bodies for sending representatives to Divisional Executives. A further valuable form of organisation is the local Council for Educational Advance. During the preliminary discussions on the Bill and during its passage into law, the National Union of Teachers, the Trade Union Congress and the Co-operative Educational Committee formed a Central Committee, with local counterparts, to do propaganda and general education for the Bill. There is not the slightest doubt that the magnificent work done by these committees was responsible for the ease with which the Bill went through the House and for the enthusiasm with which its passage was greeted in the country. In many areas they are still meeting monthly and their value is indisputable.

This is the hour when all good citizens should come to the aid of education; should help to get the Act fully implemented in their own areas and so give to the children of this generation an opportunity for full, rich living which so many of their parents missed.

LEAH MANNING

THE MODERN FAMILY

DURING the war I was working at a hospital for the treatment of neurotic soldiers, men who had broken down into nervous illnesses under the many strains of war. In the same hospital there were also wards for the treatment of physical ailments, into which were admitted many other soldiers with wounds, injuries and bodily disorders. I was interested in the background factors, that is the causes in heredity and in earlier life, which go to bring about a disposition to nervous illness, and also in the problem whether people of nervous disposition tend to marry others of like disposition to themselves. It seemed to me that the circumstances of admission to the hospital were very favourable for staging an enquiry into these problems, and in fact an investigation on these lines was begun and carried through. The field-work of the study was done by a psychiatrically trained social worker, Mrs. Moya Woodside, who has reported some of the preliminary findings in the "Eugenics Review."

What Mrs. Woodside did was to obtain the names of married men, all soldiers, who had wives and homes in the London area. The names were chosen entirely at random out of the Admission Register of the hospital. These men were invited to an interview, at which, if they were willing, questions were asked about their childhood and family life, their

upbringing and school and working lives, the circumstances under which they met the women they married, their courtship and lives after marriage. Appointments were then made to interview the wives, from whom an exactly similar history was taken. Equal numbers of men from the wards for nervous and for physical illness were taken, i.e. in all two hundred families, one hundred of each sort. The importance of the study for our present purpose is that, in the men who were suffering from bodily injuries and ailments, we have what seems to be a pretty fair sample of a London working class population. These men were labourers, clerks, small tradesmen, and so forth; and we obtained a picture of the ways in which they married and set up home, of their lives together, of their plans and practice in the matter of having children. Some of the details of this picture are instructive when we come to consider the various currents that have the family of to-day in their grip and are sweeping it out into the uncharted waters of tomorrow.

The principal factors which determine the original meeting of the young people who eventually married one another, seem to be chance and geographical propinquity. Very nearly a quarter of them had run into each other in the street; and many of the rest had met at work, at dance-halls, canteens, cafes, pubs, cinemas, the speedway, etc. Only about one in six had been introduced by relatives or friends; and if we take together all such modes of meeting as are regarded as socially unexceptionable in more prosperous circles, such as personal introduction, acquaintance gained in club, church and political activities, as neighbours, or in the past as school-children—no more than 40% of the whole group had met in this way. The majority had, in fact, met in a highly casual fashion, which brings no guarantee of the character of the persons thus acquainted. There seems to be only a very small chance of anyone marrying far outside their economic status; slum populations and the inhabitants of suburbia alike seem to marry within their own boundaries.

Once the two young people have met, what is it that causes a mutual feeling of attraction? We have been able to get no guidance at all from the subjects of our enquiry. People just do not know, at least in our experience, which of course includes very few of the highly self-analytic kind of person, what it is that attracts them to each other. First impressions are, however, obviously important. Superficial qualities of appearance and manner play a big part, nice eyes, white teeth, attractive hair, a cheerful manner, the ability to dance well. They are all things which have only a remote connection with the qualities which go to make a successful marriage. Freudians have suggested that there is a tendency among men to marry women who resemble their mothers, and among women to marry men who are like their fathers. If this is true, it might account for the quite special attraction which is exercised on some people by grey eyes, for example, on others by a buxom figure—without their being able to offer any explanation. It is also likely that it is in the

making of this first contact that people with some drawback, such as the really plain girl, or the man with a limp, meet their biggest difficulty in finding a mate. For as acquaintance ripens, the importance of these superficial qualities recedes. Instead, the quality of attractiveness becomes vested in a vague feeling of compatibility. Our subjects found it as difficult to analyse this as to put their fingers on the cause of the original attraction. However, we can make a shrewd guess as to what it is.

Very extended sociological research by many workers has shown that, in whatever quality the matter has been tested, married people tend to resemble one another. Even in such apparently trivial and irrelevant things as the size of the township in which they had been born, or their smoking habits, married people are more alike one another than chance would allow, and in other more fundamental qualities resemblance is surprisingly close. It has been found that husbands and wives are about as like in intelligence as are brothers and sisters. I think it very probable that the feeling of compatability, which is an almost necessary forerunner of affection, rests on this apprehension of likeness. It is of good omen for the marriage that people choose those who resemble themselves; for it has also been found by American sociologists and psychologists that those marriages where there is a general similarity in temperamental make-up and in opinions and attitudes have a good chance of being successful, whereas the unhappy marriages are frequently those in which there is some preponderance of dissimilarity.

Men and women do not feel this in any conscious way, but rather dimly and instinctively. Their choice is certainly not based on rational grounds. It is rare indeed for a man to lay any importance, when coming to a decision, on the practical qualities of his bride, on for instance, her punctuality and cleanliness, or her ability to cook a good meal, even though these things do eventually prove important for their happiness.

What is the sex behaviour of these young people during the period of their courtship? We have found that rather more than half the men and about a quarter of the women have had sex relations before marriage. Considering the amount of outcry that has been made about the sexual laxity of our day, this seems a low proportion. Maybe we have been misled by misstatements inspired by reticence or shyness. In socially more prosperous classes in the U.S.A., higher figures have been found. Terman, for instance, in 1938 reported that in an upper-middle class sample he investigated, virginity at the time of marriage was claimed by 50% of the men over 45, by 42% between 35 and 45, by 33% of those aged 25-35, and by only 14% of those under 25. Among the wives there was a similarly catastrophic drop from 87% to 74%. 51% and finally 32%. He remarks, "If the drop should continue at the average rate shown for those born since 1890, virginity at marriage will be close to the vanishing point for males born after 1930 and for females born after 1940. It is more likely that the rate of change will become

somewhat retarded as the zero point is approached and that an occasional virgin will come to the marriage bed for a few decades beyond the dates indicated by the curves. It will be of no small interest to see how long the cultural ideal of virgin marriage will survive as a moral code after its observance has passed into history."

The secular change in sexual ethics noted by Terman was also noticeable in our working class population. The younger members of our group were more easily able to discuss the matter on a rational level than were the older ones. Many of them, however, still found good practical grounds for continence. Fear of an undesired pregnancy was frequently mentioned; but few seemed at the time of our enquiry to have been much influenced by Government propaganda in favour of clean living, and the danger of venereal disease roused but little anxiety. Mention must also be made of the wide variations that exist in individual sexual needs. Actual lack of desire, or of any urgency of desire, was often cited as a reason for chastity.

What then is it that impels a working man and woman to get married? The reasons are many, and it is rather difficult to order them in importance. Marriage means a home, a new home and a better one than that from which they have come. In the parental home there is hardship, squalor, cramped quarters and often enough discord. In marrying, they can get away from that and start a new venture, even if in the end it comes to no better fate. There is also increased social prestige in the married state, especially for women; and some women aim to get married, no matter to whom, rather than remain single. Marriage is almost necessary for a man and woman who want to live together, and if that is their wish it is the obvious recourse. It is expected of them by society, and it is not difficult to comply. Even a Hollywood-inspired notion of romance has some effect. But it is interesting and important that the satisfaction of sexual needs, and the intention to have children do not play a prominent role. Children are thought of as an ulterior end, as an aid to the success of the marriage, rather than as a determining factor in the immediate situation.

Some restriction of family is practically universally desired. Nevertheless about one in five of our subjects were not engaging in any sort of planning. Four out of every five were taking some steps to limit the number of their children. It is a most interesting thing that these steps were so often unsuccessful. Of all the children born only one in three had been specifically planned; rather more than half had not been planned, but were reasonably welcome when they arrived, and the remainder, or about one in nine, had been definitely unwanted. When asked how many children they would like to be able to have, about 1% say none, and about 4% say one; 60% say two, and a diminishing number three and four. Not more than 2% want more than four children. So the evidence provided by our survey is that people have already gone far in controlling the number of their children, but are frequently failing

to get exactly what they would wish to have, and failing in both directions. Only about 5% of married people want none or an only child and yet the no- or one-child family is certainly the commonest at the present time; and at the same time children are being born who are undesired. Contraceptive measures are far from perfect. The commonest method employed is that ancient and unreliable method which antedates all our modern contrivances. Where modern methods are employed, the ones chosen are not the best; and only too frequently a history was obtained of not having bothered, of having taken a chance, in fact of lethargy, laziness, lack of persistence and stupidity. Mrs. Woodside concluded that less than 5% of the couples were using any method consistently and with intelligence. Everything considered, it is a wonder that such a big statistical effect is being produced, when technique is so often slipshod.

Why is it that people reduce the number of their children below what they would wish to have if circumstances were favourable? The reasons most frequently given are shortage of money, shortage of housing, insecurity of job. Well behind these come considerations of health, worries, responsibilities, and marital discord. The lesson that I think is there to be learned, is that our attack on the falling birthrate should be a social one. If we could make this world one in which it was easy and convenient to have children and to bring them up, the children would be forthcoming. But we need not think that any but a sprinkling of people will ever again have the very large families of a generation ago.

This then is a thumbnail sketch of the foundations of the family in a present-day urban community. Attitudes long current in more prosperous circles are filtering down to the under-privileged and there producing their inevitable consequences. Our civilisation is in a state of revolutionary change, a stage of transition from haphazard to planned reproduction. There is still a large element of the casual, and we can expect the present tendency to go much further before an equilibrium is reached. By this I do not mean that the reproduction rate will continue to drop much further, but that we can expect an increasing proportion of the children of the future to be deliberately planned. This is all to the good. Unwanted children are a frequent cause of unhappiness both to their parents and to themselves.

There are two other important sources of change in our pattern of marriage and family-building. The first of these is the entry of the state on a large scale into the management of children. This has already shown itself in a number of directions—family allowances, provision of school meals, of day and residential nurseries and of home helps, allowing the mother to go out to work, and a widening of cost-free education of an ever improving quality. The effect of state interference of this kind will, I believe, show itself more in a change in our manner of life than in an alteration of the birth-rate. The child will spend an ever greater part of his time out of the home; the natural mother will become a less and the professional mother a more import-

ant influence in his life. For those of us who have seen some of the disastrous consequences of maternal incompetence in the rearing of the child, the replacement of the amateur by the professional mother will hold out the prospect of at least some advantages to set against its inevitable disadvantages. There will, however, no doubt be limits to this process too. Children are a great source of pleasure to many if not to all parents, and those who have put themselves to the trouble of becoming parents will demand some compensations. Alva Myrdal has pointed out that though the economic, the educative and many other functions of family life have lost in significance, the affectional relationship may thereby gain rather than lose. We can expect to see the state take over many of the more troublesome and difficult duties of parenthood, permitting mothers especially to lead fuller individual lives of their own, with a balance of profit to the family relationship.

The second important factor which I should like to mention is the change in our sexual ethics. This is a matter which is, perhaps, of especial interest to the Ethical Union. People are changing their moral standards under our eyes. Are there any principles which one could lay down to help them? Although I doubt whether much can be done at the present time to cut short the painful process of trial and error, there are better hopes for the future. The possible elaboration of a logical basis for a system of ethics has recently been much debated between scientists and philosophers. It seems to have been generally agreed that this is hardly possible without preliminary assumptions which cannot logically be defended. Ethics depends on values, on a belief that A is better than B; and when one man asserts this and another denies it, there is no way of proving that either has truth on his side. I think that a way round this logical impasse might be found. Only an infinitesimal proportion of the human race, maybe a few religious fakirs, perhaps no more than one man in a million, would take the view that he personally would rather be unhealthy than healthy. A probability of agreement of this order would be, although admittedly irrelevant to the logical issue, a sufficiently sure basis for pragmatic purposes. Health and the lack of it are terms capable of fairly strict definition and objective demonstration. If they could be accepted as values, they would act as a bridge between the universe of ethics and the universe of science. Those things could then be regarded as, on the whole, good which tended towards promoting the health of human beings, and those things as evil which tended to impair it. To show that some human activity was either good or bad it would be sufficient to show that it had an effect on health. One might instance the consumption of a bottle of whisky a day and indulgence in extra-marital sex relations. The first of these almost certainly always has a deleterious effect on health; the second has not yet been shown to have a bad effect unless certain other conditions are also fulfilled. In deciding the question whether a given activity was either good or bad, we should

have to call in the aid of the sciences of biology, sociology and psychology. I believe that the future of ethics lies in the definition of its problems along lines like these, and in an approach to the elucidation of causes and effects by established scientific methods.

ELIOT SLATER

THE SOCIAL IDEAL

THE purpose of this paper is to present some of the main considerations which are raised by the attempt of British people here and now to grasp the social ideal as a whole. In the history of peoples, such attempts are made very early, at least as early as the epic poetry of their heroic age. Reflection upon these poetic idealizations of primitive society and upon the social challenge which sooner or later they provoke leads to philosophical idealizations, to Plato's *Republic,* for example, The *Republic* is a systematic, comprehensive discussion of the principles of economics, politics, family life, religion, education, philosophy, art, and literature, treated not as departments or aspects of social life, as Aristotle treated them in separate treatises less than a generation later, but dealt with concretely in the ideal reconstruction of the total life of a city community. That unity of treatment disappeared with the independent life of the city state which made it real, and it is not seriously recovered in the Utopias of literature. In our time the problems and techniques of mass organisation have again made that unity of treatment, on an immense scale this time, both feasible and compelling, and have revived a more than academic interest in the *Republic.* But in the long historical interim the social ideal has appeared in the form of regulative principles, such as, for example, the concept of natural law, or the revolutionary programme of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The materials of this sort which history bequeaths to the social idealist are vast and important. But they are not materials which we can use to construct our own social ideal. Although they are most necessary to our education, they belong to the past. They were weapons in battles long ago; they were thrown in to influence actual issues. Even the *Republic* was a polemic. We do not go to the museums for weapons and tools. Our own ideal must be made out of the issues of present controversies and the fateful alternatives of today's choice.

For us the situation which has established the conditions of our social ideal and which raises the issues which have to be decided is the necessary passage from a pioneer individualist society to a settled controlled society. The pioneer phase, of course, broke up an older settled and controlled order of society by introducing revolutionary methods of economic production. This situation which imposes itself upon us, if you take it imaginatively in the long-run of its development,

involves those who are caught in the crisis of its transition (as we are) in such a radical readjustment, such a fundamental change of personal habits and judgments, that the real issues are dangerously confused by actual complexities and personal perplexities, and the real battles horribly prolonged by mistaken engagements between partisans of the same side. There is unparalleled need for a persistent attempt to see the new social ideal steadily and see it whole. My attempt here cannot be so ambitious; all that I can do is to present the main considerations, as I understand them, which bear on this task.

A practical beginning must start with the present position of socialism in this country, for socialism in its ideal aim is the constructive work of making the necessary transition to a settled order of society. No apology is necessary for beginning in this way either to socialists or to non-socialists; for socialism is in operation and on trial. Therefore its most convinced and ardent advocates are its keenest critics: it has entered on a new phase. If Sir William Harcourt said fifty years ago, "We are all socialists nowadays," somebody might as well say today, "We are all critics of socialism." For socialization of the common life is the art we are practising, the practice we are obliged to understand and accept and make to work. The crude division of the country by the popular press into socialists and their opponents is fatally out of date. For socialists in office begin to develop, and their opponents have to develop rapidly too; new possibilities emerge and new alignments take place: the political scene is transformed. The constructive friendliness of *The Times* and of *The Manchester Guardian,* for example, is more representative, more genuinely interpretative, than the peevish hostility of the editorials which have a big circulation. What is in mind in these quarters is not, how to get the Socialists out, how to combat Socialism in the country, but, how much of the vitality of liberalism can be saved under the new regime, the inevitable new regime; and, how many of the deadly effects of bureaucratic control can be prevented by intelligent criticism and sensible provisions; and, can our conception of social democracy which we are working out in practical effects be reconciled with the Soviet Union's notion and practice of democracy?

The argument from the friendly critic who does not fight against providence sometimes tries to make a distinction between the things which belong to Caesar and the things which do not, to draw a boundary between the province of collective decisions and that of private choice, in the hope of finding private ground naturally made for a citadel against the invasion of the modern state. Mr. E. M. Forster, for example, in *The Challenge of Our Time* series of broadcasts, concedes to socialism the material order but reserves the world of the spirit, of culture, from interference. Many insist that religious belief is untouchable. It is an historic claim, and has recently been vigorously reasserted by Professor Macmurray, who says plainly, "So long as the field of religion is excluded from the competence of political authority, every-

thing is excluded which democracy requires." I am not sure that this is a hopeful or a useful approach to make. But there is an instructive analogy from the fields of science, art, and morals, which have their public and private reference. Science means public knowledge, open conclusions openly arrived at, and research and the application of its results are organized according to public policy; but the personal experience created by the use of this publicly established knowledge—the view of the world I build up, the subjects I pursue—is private; there is here a world of private consumption, material as well as spiritual, provided by public methods and public policy. In the arts, the element of tradition and the element of social application are both public, and the experience which the arts express and which they stimulate or engender is personal. In morals there is an objective social tradition of what is right and wrong, but men personally select the virtues and values they cherish and form their own purposes and characters. The point is not that there are some fields in which collective decisions are out of place and ought not to be taken; the point is that collective decisions in any field ought not to be arbitrary, ought to provide a stable, objective, public conditioning of private choice and private planning. What is important is that collective decisions and public control in any field shall not fundamentally discourage, baffle, frustrate, or supersede private choice and private action, but shall prescribe its conditions on principles generally upheld and reliably enforced. Even the attempt to exempt the religious field, the entrenched stronghold of protesting, non-conforming individual conscience, from collective decisions and public policy looks a little odd in the light of history, if we remember, for example, that it was the collective or communal form of expression which dominated the Christian world for more than a thousand years until the 19th century, and that modern Christian thinkers recognize that the future of Christianity is bound up not with the vicissitudes of its sects but with the prospects of Christendom, its ability to inform and redintegrate modern culture and to regain its hold upon communal life. Successful personal life is a delicate interplay of subjective and objective elements, public and private interests. The fruitfulness of this interplay is not subject to rules, and it is arbitrary, useless, and confusing to claim an absolute untouchable liberty for the individual at any point. When that has been said, it is important to add that the traditional safeguards of democratic order do promote and protect this fruitful interplay in the most satisfactory way that human experience of social life has yet devised.

A critical approach more useful than the attempt to confine collective decisions by prescription, or the attempt to formulate the Rights of Man, has been the method of Professor Hayek who has seized on the distinctive character of State planning and argued from that, fortifying his argument with the examples of history and the evidence of current events. The latest exposition of his thesis, in the Finlay lecture

Individualism: True and False, argues that central planning in the nature of the case is the work of a few minds proceeding on rational principles; that is to say, the plan is systematic, complete, and exclusive (allows of nothing else not provided in the plan). If it is not this the plan is a bad plan or is not a plan at all. Therefore you can get out of a good plan no more than a few finite rational minds put into it, consciously. You are very lucky indeed if you get as much as that; if the plan works well enough to give you all that was consciously put into it; if all who have to work it are as keen and intelligent about it as the planners themselves. And you are luckier still if your experts who produce the plan are highly intelligent, gifted, and disinterested persons. Whereas true individualism is not a limited rational performance but a process of nature; each individual person and group, stimulated and guided by interests and the grooves of the social situation, does better than knowledge or intention could do, and the outcome vastly exceeds in human development the scope of any possible plan. The few who control and plan, however intelligent, cannot equal the diverse activities of the many left to themselves; and they may be fools or knaves. Moreover, central planning, since it has to put all individuals directly or indirectly under orders for the purposes of the plan, detaches them from all other relations and associations, from immemorial controls, from their responsiveness to tradition, from local loyalties, ideals, customs, habits; so that the planners, having destroyed the spontaneity of persons, have only robots to carry out their plan; having imposed their plan, have destroyed society and created a mass of moral paupers on whom they must enforce it. This creation of modern mass society is the irreparable destruction worked by rational minds in the name of the social ideal. This devastating result, Hayek argues, is the necessary outcome of State planning.

The argument is in principle the argument of Burke against the French Revolution, against any attempt to erase the past and rationalize the future of society. As an abstract argument it is right, and Professor Hayek has done well to give us a timely reminder of it, brought up to date and pressed home with conviction. But it is not (although Professor Hayek thinks it is) a refutation of socialism in principle. It is a warning of what can happen to socialism in practice. The argument throws a spot-light on the central problem for socialism. The problem is to secure that voluntary associations, local authorities, individual effort and initiative, personal choice, public spirit, and the like are all stimulated and facilitated and directed by State planning, and not frustrated or destroyed. What is needed for this purpose is not opposition to socialism, but intelligent and informed day-to-day criticism, and the development of techniques, standards, safeguards, and research proper to the age and its problems. Opposition to socialism will destroy for certain (as socialism need not) the vital pluralist society we want, for it will destroy the necessary central planning and public control, or else force

the government into dictatorship. Liberty, liberalism, will not be killed by socialism, for if it opposes socialism it is already dead, because socialism is the contemporary condition of liberty. This critical recognition is the searching test of democracy in our time; in this country the crisis is with us during the next years. Social planning may attempt to supersede nature with an ideal rational system; or it may attempt to make nature (human nature) work. There is here a world of difference. We must understand that difference, and learn to recognize the signs which distinguish each kind. Professor Hayek regards State planning as necessarily of the first kind, and condemns it; but we may, we ought to regard necessary planning as of the second kind, and to accept and work it. If we oppose planning in principle, we necessarily make it, if we get it, planning of the first kind; or we get, as the only alternative, the increasing catastrophes of an unplanned society.

Plato's *Republic* is the classic example of abstract rational planning, the false social ideal. Plato idealized nature as a rational system, and he idealized society, and individual man, on the same principle. The inherent tendency of the idealizing, rationalizing mind is to find perfection in the aesthetic ideal of system, the subordination of parts in a whole existing for an end beyond itself: then perfection is found in due subordination and the fulfilment of function governed by the final end which is absolute. Plato exhibited this supreme folly in a pre-eminent degree. His Guardians governed the state because they had esoteric wisdom, because they were trained to know the Absolute Good which justified and subordinated all things. If the aesthetic ideal of system prevails, with a super-eminent end which is the principle of the system, then the rationalists and idealists will plan the destruction of society for a chimera: the Absolute Idea, the salvation of the soul, the destiny of the race, the achievement of Superman, the liquidation of the State. If society is idealized as a system, an end will be found for the sake of which the system exists, and which justifies subordination and enthrones control. Similarly, if a philosophic or religious or historical end is looked for to justify the existence of man, society will be idealized as a system to realize that end. But society is not a rational system; and it is not an organism. There is no analogy for society. The individuals and associations of individuals do not exist or function for the sake of the whole, nor the whole for the sake of itself or of anything beyond itself: the parts with each other and in the whole are reciprocal and mutual in the most intimate and unexampled manner. Society is *sui generis,* an original type. This must be understood, because an idealization of society by analogy is fatally false, and has been historically a most evil human propensity. Society is the historical life of man which, individual and collective, is only to be thought of in the unity of its diversity and in the diversity of its unity. To begin the break up of this intimate unity by ideal abstractions or abstract ideals is to enter upon disastrous folly.

Yet undoubtedly a common purpose gives social co-operation its

most satisfactory inspiration and a popularly intelligible rationale. If you say (as you must) that human life, individual and collective, is one and indivisible, you may at least attempt to define or describe its finest and fullest realization. And there is no reason why refined philosophical statements should not be worked out for personal inspiration and guidance; nor indeed adopted collectively as public standards. What is important is that any such definitions and descriptions shall respect the true character of human life, and not sacrifice it, for the sake of some postulated end, as, for example, it is sacrificed (ideally) in the Catechism of the Book of Common Prayer, and was sacrificed (actually) in the Nazi idealization of Superman. We need standards of civilization, and that is to say that we need profound and inspiring expressions of personal and of social ideals of a complete human life, and the personal ideals must be at the same time social ideals, and the social ideals personal ideals. I repeat that an ideal of this kind may be adopted collectively and used as a standard of public policy (in education, for example), and I think it is desirable that there should be such a publicly acknowledged ideal, and that it should win universality. Otherwise there cannot be intelligent command of human destiny. Such an ideal, if it does justice to the profounder possibilities of human existence, is likely of course to be too ideal, to go beyond the full apprehension and ready capacities of the many. That cannot be helped: it is the nature of an ideal to make demands and to be indifferent to insufficiency. An adequate ideal cannot be popular. That does not mean that it must be esoteric, the exclusive possession of a privileged initiated few to whom for that reason social power is confined. It can be truly social, pervasive, universal, and influential. T. S. Eliot in his *Idea of a Christian Society* has delineated the social structure of such an ideal. He recognizes three factors in the functional order of a society unified and sustained by an ideal: (1) public commitment, the settled assumption, acceptance, and expectation of the ideal; (2) the unseen unofficial spiritual community of individual persons who strive to perfect themselves in the ideal; (3) the common community of ordinary persons who conform to the practices, observances, beliefs, and customs in which the ideal has become socially established. Society is a going concern, and there can be few who altogether escape a sense of what it demands and what it gives. Nothing can exceed or supersede the common natural fulfilments which it sustains; and any social ideal which attempts to do so is false. What a pervasive social ideal can do is to harmonize, achieve, and enhance all natural fulfilments: it cannot do more. What is important (it can be repeatedly insisted) is that social ideals shall be personal ideals and personal ideals social ideals. This essential identity and interpenetration of personal and social ideals is one form of moral safeguard against historical repetition of the enormities of human behaviour for the sake of ideals.

It is here that the Ethical Movement has a mission, along with other agencies in society, the mission, namely, of mediating between the ideal

and the individual person or association of persons—all the elements of a pluralist society. The task, in the first place, is to win acceptance for a social ideal that expresses the true character of human life (as the Christian ideal, for example, does not): and, in the second place, to win personal adherence to that ideal and develop understanding of its demands and conception of its fulfilment; and, in the third place, to establish it in the public mind and in social practice. It is not the function of a democratic government to impose a social ideal upon the people; it is the function of democratic government to give effect, under criticism, to the social ideal collectively accepted by the people. Of course a political party may offer a social ideal for acceptance, and be given power to put it into effect. Socialism is such an ideal, and there is a political mandate for it. But Socialism, like the social ideal of any political party, is mainly a method of administration to secure certain conditions of life. It has, and can have, no word to say about the ultimate uses of human existence. Yet the ultimate use of human existence is not, and never has been, merely a personal question; it must be a social question; the identity of personal and social life is involved in it; it is the question which decides the character of a civilization. Certain answers to it are false in principle and disastrous in practice. Eventually no answer will do which is not collectively accepted. But it cannot be the business of a political party to formulate and canvass any answer to this question. That is sufficient to indicate the permanent difference between such a movement as the Ethical Movement and such a party as the British Labour Party.

It does not lie within the compass of my present purpose to develop any view of what the ultimate social ideal might be. I have tried to indicate the main considerations which the attempt to conceive the ideal raises, and some of the important conditions which any tolerable ideal must satisfy. It is only fair, however, that I should end by exposing the result of my own reflections upon this matter. At this time of day no social ideal, if it is true, can be new. The ideal use of human existence, then, as I apprehend it, is to create and to express a complete personal experience of history—the ongoing life in nature and in society. This is put in the form of a personal ideal, but it implies an ideal of social order, and its implications are intensely social; for it leads to the deepest dynamic participation in the ongoing life of society and it presupposes a developed and progressive civilisation; indeed, it maximises the use made of and the contribution made to the resources and the achievements of civilisation. It is of course highly abstract and does not seek to pre-determine society in any contingent form. It is at the same time thoroughly empirical and gives the prescription for creative change. It does not go as far as the ideal of love, which transcends, although it cannot supersede, the ideal of justice—because it will not be satisfied with conciliation and compromise of interests but insists on harmony and identity of interests, will not let off the individual with playing his

part and doing his duty but insists on his making good the evil of others and seeking moral union with mankind. The personal and social ideal I have formulated may or may not lead to this ideal of love; at any rate it goes beyond the merely political ideal of justice, as any ultimate social ideal must. However, it is not necessary in this context to expand, expound, and justify any particular formulation of the ideal, for my purpose is limited to a discussion of its essential character and conditions for anybody in this country now. Thus: (1) we must begin with the imperatives of the existing social situation, viz., transition to a planned society; (2) our ideal must interpret the actual character of human life, and not idealize a pattern of abstract relations; this principle not only undermines all those social ideals which are based on false analogies, but also is itself the principle of fruitful planning and the principle which should limit political authority; (3) the ultimate social ideal is also the ultimate personal ideal, and the ultimate personal ideal is the social ideal: (4) the social ideal is not merely a political ideal, e.g justice, but is the fully concrete ideal of complete humanity.

The working out of such principles, in criticism and in construction, gives an approach to present problems and leads to positions of vantage and clear views.

H. J. BLACKHAM

BOOK REVIEWS

Our Threatened Values. By Victor Gollancz. Gollancz, 5s.

Respect for personality is the phrase used by Mr. Gollancz to indicate the root principle governing human intercourse which is now endangered, not only by Soviet Russia, not only by remnants of Nazism, but also by trends inside the Western European countries, including Great Britain. He sees this internal danger not primarily in the socialist control of more and more branches of life, but above all in our fashion of disowning pity or mercy or kindness as the motive for action, and in the sensational reporting and picturing of human suffering in the papers. Along with this he sees heartless self-righteousness in our attitude to whole peoples and to individuals. Charity and humility are being replaced by self-righteous callousness which delights to judge, and even enjoys the suffering of the condemned.

It is rightly maintained in this book that the test of respect for personality is, above all, how we treat evil doers, those who disagree with us, our enemies. Hence the author may legitimately claim that our treatment of Germans is central to the consideration of our present tendency to betray the values which have leavened Western civilization. But Mr. Gollancz devotes 75 pages out of 157 to the vivid consideration of what the Allies have done to Germany, and to his suggestions of what our basic moral principles should make us do. The facts he brings to our attention are so painful and his moral criticism so vital, that one feels

almost frivolous in turning to criticism of his argument. However, the weakness of the book is not mere lack of unity, for the result of it is that the author never deals adequately with the present moral crisis which he uses as his introduction to the consideration of Germany. Neither does he deal adequately with the full political problem which a statesman must face in dealing with Germany. He is only interested in the fundamental moral principles involved, and these principles he takes to be those of charity and humility, particularly towards enemies. The strength of the book lies in the vivid clarity with which this challenge is made. Clearly Gollancz has been roused to the defence of our values by our supine acceptance of the civilians from Eastern Germany, by our callous public statements when faced by starvation in our own zone of Germany, and by our self-righteousness in relation to Germany. He also perceives that in Germany above all we come to grips with Russia, who offers the chief external threat to our ethical conceptions. So that our policy towards Germany is vital in the defence or betrayal of our values.

The Times Literary Supplement, reviewing the book, attacks the author for not giving a satisfactory answer to the very practical question, "Why should I not starve the civil population of Germany if it pleases me to do so?" Personally I consider the second part of the book gives the only real answer. It makes us realise what starvation and eviction mean to the people who are starved and evicted. It also makes us face the question how far young people and children, the ignorant, the ordinary men and women who did not face martyrdom, the embittered and desperate, were or were not "guiltier" than we were ourselves. If after facing the realities of the situation it still pleases anyone to starve a whole nation, then such a person is beyond moral appeal. Mr. Gollancz actually recognizes two grounds for respecting personality; the one, shared by Jews and Christians, asserts the brotherhood of man derived from the fatherhood of God; the other is the position of liberal humanists who accept the moral and factual insight that men should treat each other as persons to be cared for as they themselves need to be cared for —without theological explanation. Gollancz does not state the purely ethical position very well, but he does not state the full Christian faith in divine revelation through Jesus Christ at all (though the reviewer in the *Literary Supplement* says that this is what he does put forward over against the humanist view). One is bound to say that here the author is dealing with his subject very sketchily.

The same reviewer also attacks Gollancz for not seeing that humility as well as charity stands and falls with Christian theology, or at least belief in God; so that liberal humanists have no basis for humility. Here also I would defend Mr. Gollancz who includes the humanists amongst those who respect personality. Respect for personality is the true root of a proper humility. If you respect personality and have experience of intercourse between equals, if you know what it is to be on good and

honourable terms with others, then the need to condemn, to sit in judgment, is painful, an outrage upon the proper free relation between equals. This is true even without reference to the fact that we all could and should be aware of the beam in our own eye, whether we believe in God and his judgment or not. "I also am not without sin," is something which a liberal humanist is fully and justifiably capable of feeling. Humility properly arises from the recognition of yourself as one of a multitude of like beings, all with the springs of good and evil in them, living in a universe of unfathomable origin, complexity, and wonder, a creature who can and should feel responsible but who can have only the smallest influence within the whole.

Finally, I resent the conclusion of the review in the *Literary Supplement*, which says that there is nothing in the remedies suggested by Mr. Gollancz to diminish the pessimism we share with him. Apart from particular policies about feeding Germans and behaving towards Russians, he says that we should really live passionately for the principles and values in which we still believe, and really try them out in the conflict with rival modes of life. It is true that if we do not have enough moral conviction to do this, then there is no leaven to leaven the terrible lump. But in such moral vitality lies the only possible hope.

VIRGINIA FLEMMING

THE VISUAL ARTS. Published on behalf of The Arts Enquiry by PEP. Oxford University Press, 10s. 6d.

First Annual Report of The Arts Council of Great Britain, 9 Belgrave Square, London, S.W.1., 1s.

More than ever before in history, human beings have every sort of instrument in their hands: they fiddle with the instruments and, while they do so, a perilous uncertainty hangs over the whole scene. The atom bomb is the symbol.

Nothing is more frustrating than to be aware that we are such poor fish that we cannot even make use of the good things we possess. We ask every sort of question to explain our folly. Thinking of the arts we may well ask what could be greater wastefulness than the total failure to employ the skills of the best living artists? Why behave as if the modern technical processes in factory production made it necessary for us to endure the production of ugliness?

The curious conviction that the British are a very inartistic race may do much to account for the neglect of resources. If people don't expect to have good art they certainly won't have it; there will only be the small work which the artist, given no opportunities, can produce for his own satisfaction. All the people who have been saddened by the stifling of the arts in England will feel a new hope if they read the report of the Arts Enquiry entitled *The Visual Arts*. Here in a slender volume is a

factual account which assembles the isolated facts over which in the past they tore their hair.

It would be unfair to recommend *The Visual Arts* report to the ordinary reader with a slight care for the arts; for such a reader it might have been enlivened and had more concreteness if it had contained a few well-chosen photographs exemplifying what the text says by giving violent contrasts; for instance, a well and a badly designed factory product, a great painting from a national collection and a pseudo-great one, paid for by good money and presented to a public gallery who, finding it too bad to exhibit, let it moulder in their cellars. *The Visual Arts* report is drily factual and for this reason needs to be studied by people having an enthusiastic care for the arts. From these facts one learns this sort of thing: that painting and sculpture are the only professions in which it is all but impossible to make a living, in Britain a few hundred painters and a few dozen sculptors alone being able to live by their earnings. "Probably no other profession gives so much free service to the community. Owing to the practice of free admission to exhibitions, initiated probably by the public galleries, but obtaining now at almost all dealer's exhibitions, the public expects to see and to enjoy the artist's work for nothing." That of the public money spent on the arts, many hundred thousand is spent annually to conserve the work of dead masters in the museums but hardly a penny of it went to living artists until a few of them were commissioned to record impressions of the war, and except indirectly through grants to C.E.M.A. That the Tate Gallery, the only national collection containing contemporary work, is without a fund for making its own purchases. That there is a complete lack of contact between industry and the artist, manufacturers being blind to the importance of employing the artist designer, the factory design room being staffed with half-fledged art students set to adapt the products of others. The art schools have not designed any satisfactory training for those who would design for industry; so that if an individual manufacturer should have enlightened ideas he finds himself unable to get hold of the right person to do his job. There is now hope that the Council of Industrial Design established by the government in 1944 will have some good influence.

These are but samples of the contents of the report, the value of which lies in the juxtaposition of many relevant facts and the tightness with which they are packed, allowing one fact to make its suggestions by being closely followed by another. The report is a good example of the work which a co-operating group of people can do; the proposals grow out of the data and do realistically and constructively deal with the situation which now exists.

Already the first proposal has become actuality with the establishment of the Arts Council. Their first annual report is just published and it is well to read it following *The Visual Arts*. It is pleasingly printed and worth preserving for the four page reprint of Lord Keynes'

words outlining his hopes for the Arts Council. Here is testimony of the turn of the tide. We can no longer complain that the state only pays artists to record war or to provide medicine for its shocks. To have the Arts Council, even if it is but one year old, with the experience of C.E.M.A. behind it, is a piece of good fortune, a beginning of what we want. One can taste quality in the work described and photographed in the report. Expectations are raised though it is still too soon to know in what degree they will be satisfied.

URSULA EDGCUMBE

HUMANITAS. A University Quarterly. The University Union, Manchester, 2s. 6d.

All the world knows that Manchester is the true capital of England, and it is fitting that it should be a venture of Manchester students which brings out a national university journal with a serious and ambitious purpose modestly embraced. The first issue promises an enterprise worthy of Manchester traditions; it is excellently produced, interestingly and competently written, and follows a firm line. Perhaps nothing could more significantly express the gravity of the times than the appearance of such a journal as this, so different in temper and purpose from what is natural and expected in literary undergraduates. There is no hint in these pages of hospitality to aesthetes or intellectuals, not to say extravagant young wits displaying the latest antics, poses, and lurking *pudeiurs*. The caper of high spirits and good parts has a short season in the sad modern world, and good and forthcoming youth is early commissioned and pledged in the service of constructive interests and threatened values. At any rate, this is a journal seriously addressed to the world in general and the universities in particular; staff and students contribute to it in the same spirit and for the same ends.

Editorial policy, however closely formulated at the outset, is rough-hewn until it gets its definite shape in the long-run of production and reception. The Editors express their belief that "the unity of those who stand for supra-material values, for the whole person and for our inherited cultural tradition, is too vital to be squandered in dispute over secondary considerations. Christians and Humanists have a common treasure to defend: the values of the Hellenic and Judaeo-Christian civilizations in which our own has its roots." No Humanist would want to take or dispute this statement lightly. It must be true to some extent; to what extent is doubtful and experimental. Essential differences between Christians and Humanists are not likely to prove matters of secondary consideration, except on special occasions and for special purposes, because they go to the root of the cultural and spiritual problems with which we are faced, and with which the journal under review is concerned. Sooner or later, if the purpose of essaying a modern cultural and social integration is taken seriously,

assumptions and first principles must be resolutely dealt with and the editorial team decisively committed. Frivolity wears many masks.

However, it is the appearance of this journal that is being noticed, and we offer the Editors sincere congratulations and wish them success. We hope that they will find readers and contributors far outside Manchester.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA. May 1946. Vol. 1. No. 1. Agent and Distributor, "The Czechoslovak," 71, Edgware Road, London, W.2. Quarterly, 5s.

Statement of Policy of Mr. Gottwald's Government. Czechoslovak Ministry of Information.

The return of the government of Dr. Benes to liberated Czechoslovakia from exile in London was not a restoration of the status quo. The first year of liberation has been a year of revolution—an extraordinary revolution. The local National Councils which gathered the elements of resistance and were set up in anticipation of liberation, and with official recognition from the government in exile, were for the most part led and directed by Communists, although the Communist Party of all pre-war political parties was the least representative. In the first period of provisional government and reconstruction, Communists played an active and prominent part in central and local administration and in trade unions and other important associations. In many cases they displaced and superseded the old leaders in organisations which were not remotely communist in the pre-war days. Their hands were strengthened by the conspicuous part played by the Red Army in saving Europe, by the Slav affiliations of the Czechoslovak people, by the strong leftward tendency in European politics, by the discredit which had fallen on many elements in the old regime, and, not least, by the acceptance and support which they and their policies received from tried and trusted outstanding leaders of the pre-war Republic, chief of whom was Dr. Benes himself, who had settled on a Slavonic orientation of policy for the post-war Republic. Thus the new policies carried sufficient prestige, authority, and goodwill to work a transformation both in outlook and in administration before public opinion was tested in the elections to the Constituent National Assembly on May 26, 1946. The result of the elections was national endorsement of the new policies and a mandate to the provisional government to carry on. Mr. Gottwald's speech to the Constituent National Assembly on July 8, the "King's Speech" of the newly elected government, outlined a two-year plan for the economic renovation and reconstruction of the Republic and declared the democratic principles of the new Constitution (guaranteeing essential freedoms and decentralizing and liberalizing the administration) which will be submitted to the Assembly. The Czechoslovak Ministry of Information has published the speech in English for distribution abroad.

Some liberal minded citizens of the old Republic, most of them in exile, have expressed bitter, detailed criticism of what has been done. Undoubtedly, the new order has been set on foot by high-handed, energetic, and revolutionary action. But it is hardly fair to judge by normal standards in a most abnormal situation. It seems fair to say now that there is national unity in Czechoslovakia and that the spirit and social content of the democracy promise to be as liberal and generous as anything that has yet been achieved by any people. This would be an extravagant statement were it not that the Czechoslovaks are politically mature and things are shaping very well. In particular, there is a new democratic administration through Local, District, and Regional Councils, backed by the determination to get rid of the last traces of authoritarian tradition and bureaucratic practice which lingered in the administration of the pre-war Republic. This revolution together with the drastic simplification of the political parties makes the framework of the new order; and in spite of complaints and laments in some quarters the outcome seems to be popular, progressive, and beneficent. There can be no doubt that the new Republic is an independent, forward looking, prospering State, resolved and eager to cultivate good relations with her neighbours and to play her part with the United Nations in the organization of peace. Her recent revolution, because it is a genuine example of constructive compromise and co-operation, offers a model of unique importance for study and reflection. Here at least is something which East and West could approve?

The quarterly magazine *Czechoslovakia* is based on a Czechoslovak monthly and is designed to "acquaint the English-speaking world with all that happens of current importance in the cultural, economic, and political life of the liberated Czechoslovak Republic." It is a large and lavish production, profusely illustrated and drawing contributions from the highest authorities. It offers English people a splendid means of interesting themselves in this exceptionally important country.

Chiltern Footpaths. By Annan Dickson. Chaterson, 7s. 6d.

There is no tract of country in England more rewarding to casual acquaintance, more satisfying to intimate knowledge, than the Chilterns, of which every secret recess is open to easy access from London. Commons, village greens, and heaths; wooded slopes and hill folds; ridges and hollows; ancient trees; hamlets, villages, and great houses; antiquities and local ways: all these, and more, contribute in profusion their character and diversity to the rich idiom of this countryside.

The book is worthy of the subject, both in writing and in production. Easily and pleasantly written, avoiding the bad manners and didactic tiresomeness of guide books and the inanities of sentimental raptures, it covers suggestively a chosen section of the Chilterns, the

Desborough Hundred, sampling what it offers and indicating the approaches and the rich variety of alternatives which continually force a choice. In the Chilterns every few paces may bring or lose a view; it is a country which must be discovered, and repeatedly discovered: therefore the author will not give any ready-made rambles, but gives the entrances to the country and the stimulus to setting out. It does not pretend to be a learned or a systematic book; its quality (and its success) is in the invitation to go and see for oneself; but it brings in adequately and skilfully the various interests which converge in a countryside: the geological structure and topographical lines, the neighbouring regional systems, antiquities and modern developments. The title is the key to the purpose and the achievement of the book. It will serve admirably those who like a day or a week-end in the country for the sake of walking in its solitudes seeing what may be seen.

The book is very pleasantly produced and profusely illustrated with photographs of all parts and contents of the Chilterns. H.J.B.

Correspondence on articles appearing in The Plain View, *April and July,* 1946.

ETHICS IN A CHANGING WORLD

Mr. Howell Smith is no doubt more familiar with the Ethical Movement than I am. His long experience leads him to the opinion that the Ethical Movement should continue as it is at present, a religious body uncommitted to any political policy, with the incidental advantage of exemption from taxation. It may be that the Ethical Movement agrees with Mr. Howell Smith. He is obviously in a better position to advise it than I am; and I should never have presumed to offer advice uninvited.

But in support of his advice Mr. Howell Smith makes statements which suggest that his knowledge of the Ethical Movement exceeds his knowledge of public life. I do not suggest that "the man who votes Conservative must belong to a different ethical world to the man who votes Labour." Obviously he need not. A situation might arise in which I should vote Conservative myself. But the good Conservative party man does, I suggest, in a very real sense move in a different ethical world to the good Socialist party man. Since Mr. Howell Smith appears to deny this, I invite him to consider why, on the last occasion when a Bill for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws was introduced into the House of Commons, the Conservative Party voted solidly against it. That solid Tory phalanx, augmented by a minority of Liberals and Labour men who yielded to religious pressure, is responsible for the fact that blasphemy is still a penal offence. Mr. Howell Smith will hardly maintain that the Tories all went into one lobby by accident.

It is a truism to say that "in so far as rational thinking and goodwill

grow among men ethical harmony becomes increasingly possible." The question is under what conditions rational thinking and goodwill can grow. The fact that a great political party so fears the effect of rational thinking on the dogmas of religion, that it votes solidly for the maintenance of penalties on their criticism in vernacular language, suggests that the growth of rational thinking requires as *one* of its conditions the progressive extinction of the influence of that political party. There are of course also others.

There is of course no Chinese wall between social classes or between Right and Left. But there is an ethical barrier. I know it, because I have climbed over it! To pretend that those who see in Franco a champion of "Christian civilisation" mean the same thing by civilisation as we humanists mean is to deceive ourselves. The future of the Ethical Movement, I am convinced, depends on the degree to which it is awake to facts like that. ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON

The two articles on the Profit Motive in the last issue of *The Plain View,* plus Mr. Howell Smith's commentary on Mr. Archibald Robertson's recent article, not only focus attention on a matter of topical interest and one of fundamental concern in social ethics but they also epitomise the conflict of opinion in the Ethical Movement as to its present task and future policy. They abundantly justify Mr. Price's selection of Ethics and Economics as a vital matter for humanist thought and action.

It is not possible in a brief note to develop the historical side of the controversy but I should have thought that both Mr. Robertson and Mr. Howell Smith were giving a very inadequate and somewhat unbalanced view of the origins of the Ethical Movement in fastening on Fox and Adler as founders and as giving it a combined Christian and Jewish ancestry. Surely equally potent elements in its formation and early development were the rationalist revolt against superstition (deriving also from the rise of the scientific outlook) and the utilitarian and individualist school of thought in philosophy, politics, and economics. Up to the beginning of the war, these elements had largely dominated the movement although a small minority strove for a broader and more modern social view. The development of private capitalism to the stage of combines and of politics to universal suffrage, the arising of the Soviet Socialist Republics of Russia, the breaking down of the old imperialism have completely changed the subjects and area of discussion in social questions, and the old thinking about them is no longer valid. New values in social ethics have to be worked out and stated and applied to the new society which is now developing around us. Archibald Robertson and John Laird and other leaders in the movement have made the necessary mental adjustment to this new world, but it seems evident from their articles that Messrs Polanyi and Howell Smith are still living in the past.

I venture to criticise the drafting of the assumptions upon which this discussion is being based. It is a very ambiguous widening of the scope to substitute "self-interest" for "profit-seeking" as though they were synonymous. "Profit" in the ordinary economic sense has a fairly definite and generally accepted meaning, and it presents a clear-cut moral issue, the rightness or otherwise of getting something for nothing by means of other people's labour. The elaborate arguments about "self interest" and "advantage" are interesting but they overlook and obscure the real fundamental issue—the effect of social structure in determining all these phenomena. There is, of course, no precise correlation between wages and services rendered and it is true that wages sometimes, by the exploitation of temporary economic power, contains an element over service remuneration as commonly recognised. Nevertheless the basic distinction between profits and wages remains. Profit is what an owner secures by the sale of his goods, goods which are produced by the workers he employs, to whom he pays wages. In so far as an owner is also an organiser or manager (in the real as distinct from the guinea pig director sense) he is entitled to wages as a worker, but this is quite another thing from the profit which he derives merely from being an owner or controller of economic power. This is quite obviously the increment in value which has come from the application of labour and if morally it belongs to any individuals it belongs to the workers who have produced it.

Thinking on individualist lines, by regarding solely the behaviour of persons and ignoring their relations to society prevents these simple issues from being seen. But one must carry this analysis further. Is Society an automatically functioning non-moral machine for which we have no responsibility, or is it a modifiable human organisation for which we are all collectively responsible? It is necessary to ask these elementary questions because there is obvious confusion in the discussion on this very issue. If we take the first view there is really very little to discuss except as a matter of academic interest. If, however, we take the second view then plainly we have a dual duty; as individuals in the economic structure we faithfully play our part as workers, and as citizens, we seek the remoulding of the social structure so as to promote the ethical conduct of industry and trade. In this context, the profit motive, based as it is upon a class-divided society, of which it is the characteristic feature, is seen in sharp contrast to the alternative of a democratic classless society, based on co-operative economic effort.

It is at this point that the controversial issues raised by Mr. Robertson call for attention. If humanists come to the conclusion that social ethics demand certain changes in politics and economics how and how far shall they carry their efforts to secure such changes? The consideration of these problems inevitably raises the further question of the relation of humanists to political parties. If the policies pursued by governments and parliaments, local authorities and economic organisa-

tions have a moral aspect then it matters very much to a humanist whether the policy of this party or that is likely or not to lead to human well-being. Put in practical terms this becomes a question whether one should vote for a Socialist or a Conservative candidate or support the proposals of this captain of industry or that trade union. This is a separate question from the irrelevant question whether the Ethical Union should become affiliated to a particular party, and a far more important one. So far as I know, Mr. Robertson has never suggested such an incongruous step. As a humanist, I am interested in vegetarianism and see some points in common in the ideas of the two movements, but I should not dream of suggesting their affiliation to one another. Those humanists who, like myself, feel that the Socialist movement is carrying a great many ethical principles into our social life feel a personal obligation to take an active share in the work of the Labour Party, in addition to such part as we may be able to play in the Ethical movement. It is equally true that the Labour Party is frequently in need of ethical criticism of its policy, and such criticism is more likely to be effective if it comes from sympathetic friends than from aloof or hostile persons with a fundamentally different conception of society. But the functions of a political party and a religious movement, while they may have some matters in common, are quite distinct and nothing but confusion could come of their combination. The Ethical movement is interested, as such, only in the ethical aspects and content of party proposals. It may feel it right to approve or condemn the views and or actions of a particular party, but it does not thereby become a party.

If, as I suggest, the basic present social ethical problem is the existence of separate conflicting class-interests in society, then the focal point for humanists, as for socialists, is the achievement of the classless society and the establishment of property rights, social and political relations, and economic functions on a just, democratic, and co-operative basis. This process may, in practical terms, involve political parties and policies, elections, trade unions and industrial policy, possibly even revolutionary activities, much of which may be technical rather than ethical, but in so far as the fundamental purpose and result is the remoulding of society nearer to the moral ideal it has an imperative claim on the loyalty of all humanists. This, I imagine, is what Mr. Robertson has in mind, and it appears to me not only good ethics but sound common sense.

J. Henry Lloyd

OBITUARY

PROFESSOR JOHN LAIRD

The death on August 5 of John Laird, Regius Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Aberdeen, deprives the Ethical Movement of an old supporter. He was one of the original members of Dr. Coit's Foundation for Moral Leadership, an appeal for the endowment of the Ethical Movement with which more than fifty of the world's leading thinkers identified themselves. Recently, he was president of the Ethical Union and a contributor to this journal.

In our time the stimulus of scientific research and the critical re-examination of traditional religious belief have produced an astonishing number of outstanding original philosophic thinkers, English, French, German, Italian, American. Laird is not to be numbered amongst the great names, but he was a brilliant expositor and critic, above the ordinary. On the appearance of his most recent book *The Device of Government,* Sir Ernest Barker in the *Manchester Guardian* called him "our modern Locke, and a better writer than Locke." This was not a real estimate, but it was a real tribute to real qualities, and an attempt to indicate their nature. He was a ready and rapid writer, and liked it. Knowing that every question is properly a maze of questions, his mind delighted in threading the maze, never losing its way, but often seeming to be more exhilarated by the complexity of the course than the prospect of reaching an issue. Naturally, one who so relished the intricacies of a subject was more hospitable in reviewing views than forceful in pressing conclusions. He was a man of skill rather than strength, of lucidity rather than conviction. Such talents can be of great service, and Laird used them to the best advantage. There are many who will miss his way of handling old problems and new books.

NOTICES

The Ethical Union is proposing to hold in London, probably in the first week-end of December, a conference for parents on The Religious Upbringing and Moral Training of Children, Without Theology. Parents who are interested in such a conference are invited to write for further information to the General Secretary.

Gollancz will publish, under the title *Puzzled People,* a report prepared by Mass Observation for the Ethical Union describing and analysing contemporary scepticism and lack of faith in the future expressed in the words of ordinary men and women in an ordinary London suburb. The price of the volume will be about 5s.

Further articles on the profit motive in trade and industry will appear in the January issue. Essays have been promised by Professor Sargant Florence, of Birmingham University, Mr. Harold Clay, of the Transport and General Workers' Union, and by the Director of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology.

TO THE READER

This journal, which is published quarterly by The Ethical Union in a new format in place of "The Ethical Societies' Chronicle," will be expanded when paper is made available.

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Information about the activities of The Ethical Union and the conditions of membership may be obtained from the General Secretary.

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